



**Training Partnerships for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness:  
A Conference to Build Stronger Partnerships On Disaster Response Training**

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**MEETING NOTES FROM SMALL BUSINESS  
INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR/STTR) E-LEARNING PROGRAM PANEL**

**Wednesday, April 21**

**Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR/STTR) E-Learning Program Panel**

*Facilitator: Brenda Cantrell, George Meany Center for Labor Studies*

Congress mandates that a percentage of NIEHS funding be used to establish Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs. NIEHS WETB has used this opportunity to create a program that fosters small business partnerships with other NIEHS awardees in the development of advanced training technologies (ATT), including e-learning, that will benefit hazmat and emergency response students and their trainers. Brenda Cantrell introduced this session by saying that the panelists would present some of the initial results of this effort while considering future directions for ATT.

Mike Classic from Y-Stress, Inc. spoke about the Y-Stress SBIR project, entitled "Scenario-Based Virtual Hazardous Awareness Training," which entails working with the George Meany Center for Labor Studies - National Labor College (GMC - NLC) to turn their current Railway Workers Online Eight-Hour Awareness Course into a more interactive, virtual hands-on SCORM-compliant version. This will be done using the latest in technologies that will allow streaming of rich multimedia content over low bandwidth connections. The goal is to increase online completion rates as well as retention by making the course more interactive and engaging so that as learning and mastery increase, the safety and health of the workers also increase. Mr. Classic emphasized that streamlining on-line curricula can help deliver high quality, interactive, and engaging content. Games, animations, and simulations can be incorporating to enhance and make the material more interesting.

Rod Wolford from FOF Communications, Inc. was the second panelist. The company's NIEHS SBIR project involves the development and evaluation of e-HazTools™, an interactive, commercially viable software product to teach or learn the fundamentals of practical chemistry for hazardous materials. E-HazTools™ will hook into public chemical databases to drive e-outcomes in questioning-method scenarios and problem-solving exercises. FOF is partnering with the National Puerto Rican Forum Consortium (NPRFC). Consortium members will provide subject matter consultation and the Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center, an NPRFC member, will provide field-test opportunities. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute also will provide expertise and field-test options.

Mr. Wolford explained that technology can sometimes have a negative appeal – as it causes people to choose people using technology instead of actual people to help with training. He explained however that utilizing both is an unbeatable combination as instructors can become empowered with advances in technology.

Dean Rathje of New Leaf Interactive Media was the final presenter. Mr. Rathje explained that spurred by an Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, New Leaf is developing a set of three worker training DVDs in collaboration with the Hazardous Materials Training and Research Institute at Kirkwood Community College. In September of 2004, New Leaf will begin marketing the DVDs for use in worker training programs. The three training DVDs are the following: Mystery Drum: 10 Steps to a Safe and Healthy Hazardous Chemical Spill Response; Lockout-Tagout for Confined Space Entry; and PPE for Brownfields: Choosing Correct PPE and Respiratory Gear for Brownfields Cleanup.